In S1901, the main server 81 receives user specific information sent from the terminal 41 via the Internet of the like.

In S1902, the main server 81 searches for and retrieves 5 user information related to the received user specific information.

In S1903, the contents of the product-by-product collection flag information contained in the user information retrieved in S1902 are checked. The contents 10 of the collection flag information here indicate whether the user intends to use the collection service.

In S1904, the section 1801 in FIG. 18 is generated as display information together with the collection flag information for each product.

15 The information decided on in S1904 forms part of the display information represented by the display example of FIG. 18.

The possible cases in which a display such as the one shown in FIG. 18 is provided include, as is the case with 20 FIG. 6, when (1) the user has not yet registered for the collection service, (2) the user has registered for the collection service, but wants to cancel the registration, or (3) the user wants to decide whether to use the collection service, separately for each order or each product. The 25 interface function provided by such a display is especially useful for case (3) above.

Returning to the description of the processing in FIG. 10, when order data is received in Step S26, it is judged in Step S27 whether or not the order data contains abnormal data. If it does, the processing returns to Step S25. If

5   it does not, the HTML data for the ordering screen shown in FIG. 7 is generated in Step S28 and sent to the user 4 in Step S29.

Next, in Step S30, it is judged whether data indicating confirmation of the order was received. If data indicating

10   cancellation was received, the processing returns to Step S25. If data indicating confirmation of the order was received, the customer information database (specifically, order history, collection flag, etc.) is updated in Step S31 and the order receipt information described above is

15   generated in Step S32.

● Shipment processing

FIG. 11 is a flowchart showing an example of shipment processing based on order receipt information. The

20   processes of the steps in the flowchart of FIG. 11 are carried out as the CPU 1501 executes processes based on the program code stored in the main storage or auxiliary storage of the main server 81.

In Step S41, one piece of order receipt information

25   is read in. Then, based on the user ID, ordered item, and order quantity recorded in the order receipt information, inventory checks are made in Steps S42 to S46. Specifically,

the inventory of each node is checked in the order: the nearby branch warehouse #1, nearby branch warehouse #2, master warehouse 5, seller (sales representative) 3 associated with the user ID, and manufacturer 1. Then,

5 procedures are taken for a goods issue from the node nearest to the user 4.

For example, if the manufacturer 1 carries inventory while other nodes do not, procedures are taken for goods issues from the manufacturer 1, master warehouse 5, and

10 branch warehouse 6 in this order in Steps S47 to S50. Needless to say, these goods issue procedures are taken in sync with the flow of toner cartridges.

In Step S50, based on the information received from the mobile terminal 62 of the expediter of the distributor,

15 it is judged whether delivery has been made in relation to the order receipt information. If it has been, delivery procedures are carried out and the order receipt information is updated (e.g., a Delivered flag is turned on) in Step S51.

20 If the branch warehouses 6 and master warehouse 5 do not carry inventory and the seller 3 does, delivery is entrusted to the seller 3 in Step S52. In response to the request, the seller 3 instructs, for example, a serviceman, to make a delivery. In that case, it is judged in Step S50

25 whether delivery has been made in relation to the order receipt information, based on the information received from the mobile terminal 32 of the serviceman.